

nasal *krey*'s. It gave vent to similar calls when taken out to be released on 9 October. But although it was still being held by the legs, during the 15 minutes it took us to reach the spot chosen for its release (a small pool surrounded by dense bushes and paddy fields) the chick remained quite silent.

During the day it often rested standing on one leg or squatting with its legs folded under it. On the only occasion when I managed to catch it fast asleep, it had turned its head back and thrust its beak into the feathers of its back. Generally, when its cage was approached, it would turn towards the person and, after raising its head and fully extending its neck, would lower its head with

a smooth third motion almost to its toes and straightaway raise it again. After repeating this a number of times it would suddenly leap up in vain attempts to get out of the cage. It was first noticed flicking its hind end (no tail feathers had appeared even on the day of its release) on 29 September. Thereafter it did so quite frequently.

In his *BIRDS OF KERALA* (1969) Salim Ali says that the nesting of the kora had not been recorded from Kerala. To the best of my knowledge the present report is the first record of the bird's breeding in south India.

October 26, 1989

K.K. NEELAKANTAN

12. HITHERTO UNRECORDED NESTING SITE OF YELLOW-WATTLED LAPWING *VANELLUS MALABARICUS* (BODDAERT)

On 1 May 1988 we came across a yellow-wattled lapwing *Vanellus malabaricus* sitting amidst thick green grass c. 15 cm high. The bird slunk away when we approached it. To our great surprise we saw two eggs there without any sign of a nest. We retreated from the spot immediately and the lapwing returned to the nest and resumed incubation. The bird was incubating the eggs when we visited the spot at 1000 hrs the next day. But the eggs could not be seen there at 1700 hrs the same day. A solitary yellow-wattled lapwing was preceding at some distance.

The typical nest is "an unlined shallow scrape on

dry open sunbaked fallow or waste land" (*HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN*, Ali, S. and Ripley, S.D. 1969). All nests we observed in the Calicut University campus since 1980 were lined with pebbles, cowdung and small pieces of dry grass. But here not even a scrape was seen; the eggs were laid simply amidst grass.

The situation in which the nest was found deviates from recorded nest sites and we wonder at the survival value the bird had in departing from the normal.

November 21, 1989

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13. GREENSHANK *TRINGA NEBULARIA* (GUNNER) FEEDING ON LARGE FISH

One aspect of the BNHS studies in the Great Vedaranyam Swamp in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu under the project 'Ecology of Point Calimere Sanctuary (An Endangered Ecosystem)' looks into the impact of an industrial salt works on waterbirds.

The birds that generally frequent the pumping station that pumps sea water into the main reservoir are fish-eating birds like egrets, storks, gulls and terns. These birds prey on the schools of fish swimming against the current of the pumped-in water. During census in the first week of September, I was surprised to see a flock of 18 greenshanks *Tringa nebularia* feeding on fish up to 5 cm long. Each bird would catch fish from the water's edge, take it to the shore, peck and handle it for about a minute before swallowing it head first. Swallowing was difficult, the bulge of the fish being conspicuous

in the throat while swallowing.

Ali and Ripley (*HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN*, Compact Edition, 1983) do not list fish as part of the diet of greenshank. Incidentally, Ali and Ripley had reported a frog in the crop of a specimen, "seemingly too big for the narrow bill and gullet". However, Cramp and Simmons (*HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA* 1985) mention that the greenshank feeds on fish fry regularly. However, in this cited case, the size of the fish was large.

September is the end of the salt extracting season and once the north-east monsoon breaks, salt production stops for about four months. During this period, less water than normal is stored in the reservoirs and condensers. This results in higher salinities and temperatures in the salt complex, as a result of which